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A NEW EDITION OF MEYER'S ACTS

Fifteen years of research have necessitated the publication of the ninth edition of the Meyer commentary on the Acts of the Apostles.¹ It is Wendt's fourth attempt to solve the problems connected with Acts. The volume is not characterized by pronounced changes of opinion. Entire sections remain as they were. Occasionally a sentence is altered, omitted, or replaced. The preface acknowledges that Norden's *Agnostos Theos* has compelled the author to abandon the defense of the historicity of Paul's address at Athens. There is a more incisive division of material which should render the commentary more usable. The section concerned with sources has been much enlarged. But in general the conclusions previously advocated are rigidly adhered to. This result might have been anticipated. After such definite positions were taken in the eighth edition a reconstruction of view was scarcely to be expected.

The author of Acts, a gentile Christian of the post-apostolic generation, employed a principal source traceable to a companion of Paul. This source is not to be regarded as merely a diary of the apostle's friend, or as a biography of Paul. It also contained much information regarding events in the early history of the Christian church. The aim of the compiler was to provide a *devotional* history of the beginnings of the church. Wendt refuses to construct the source *in toto* but is quite positive that the ninth chapter was not found in it. As far as Paul is concerned, it began with the narrative of the so-called first missionary journey. It contained only a brief description of Paul's conversion now found in chap. 26. The other two descriptions of this central crisis in the life of the apostle are of only secondary value. And the source responsible for the later chapters of Acts is the continuation of the source underlying 15:35-41, 13, 14; 11:19 f.; 6:1-8:2; 5:12-15; 4:32-35; 2:43. The criticisms passed upon this theory by reviewers of the previous edition and the investigations of Harnack and others need no repetition.

Since Acts depends upon Josephus, its date of publication is fixed between 95-100 A.D. But Schürer's verdict on the question of this dependence was that "either Luke never read Josephus or immediately proceeded to forget all about having done so." The explanation proposed for the peculiar conclusion of Acts is that the source employed

¹ *Die Apostelgeschichte. Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament begründet von Heinr. Wilh. Meyer. 9. Auflage. Von Hans Hinrich Wendt. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1913. iv+370 pages. M. 8.*

terminated at this point. Thus the compiler of Acts is accused of so slavishly copying his source as to fail to chronicle the rather essential fact that Paul died and yet, *mirabile dictu*, dares to add the ninth chapter. Surely the prominence given in recent years to the question of the conclusion of Acts deserved more thoroughgoing attention. Only a footnote contains information regarding the well-sustained argument for the "Western" reading of 13:8. A sentence or two showing the possible connection between "Western" renderings of 13:8; 24:27 and Josephus, *Ant.*, XX, vii, would have added to the value of the commentary. Six pages are devoted to a discussion of the apostolic decree. The decision is in favor of the four-clause text. This text is regarded as authentic. The Jerusalem gathering actually adopted a food regulation. The mistake of the compiler was in universalizing its significance by appending such a verse as 16:4. The decree was intended for a very limited area. But the solution of the difficulty by the elimination route is too easy. One feels that the argument against the "Eastern" text has not been appreciated, that the argument in favor of the "Western" text has not been refuted. Lake's points seem to have escaped the eye of Wendt. Although our commentator's conclusions occasionally appear untenable, the student is impressed with the careful sifting of the material and the air of genuineness which characterize his work.

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STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF DOCTRINE

The timely dissertation of Dr. Stokes¹ traces the development of the "vision of a new and better moral order" from Augustine through Aquinas to Leibnitz, and in a closing chapter sets forth the relation of earlier conceptions to that of Kant. As none of these writers before Kant employs the phrase "kingdom of ends," Dr. Stokes operates with no scholastic definition, but indicates that the term usually refers to a "community whose purpose is the completest possible moral development of its members." As regards the *City of God*, she considers unfair the current interpretation which makes Augustine teach "that the state necessarily has its origin in fraud and violence, and that it is and must remain the creature of sin" (p. 27). The discussion of Augustine, though suggestive, neglects important recent literature, such as Maus-

¹ *The Conception of a Kingdom of Ends in Augustine, Aquinas, and Leibnitz*. By Ella Harrison Stokes. University of Chicago Press, 1912. iv+129 pages. \$0.75 net.